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To FCC personnel:

I am writing to express my concern with the pending acquisition of T-Mobile USA by AT&T. I am a customer of both companies, and will be directly affected by any FCC decision. I live in rural Nevada, where AT&T and T-Mobile are the only GSM wireless providers. If this merger is allowed to go through, AT&T will have a monopoly for GSM wireless service in our market. GSM has specific benefits for international travelers that are not available on other wireless technologies. Those, like me, that chose T-Mobile because 1- They weren't AT&T and 2- They use GSM, will have to make a tough choice to make if this acquisition is approved.

AT&T has consistently ranked the worst telecommunications provider for customer service. My personal experience is their customer service was acceptable, but has steadily declined. After T-Mobile lost customers due to the iPhone (which originally was exclusive to Cingular, another AT&T acquisition), T-Mobile was forced to innovate. For the past 2 or 3 years, T-Mobile has ranked as the best wireless carriers in customer service.

AT&T is already well known for anti-consumer behavior, and this will no doubt only get worse as they eliminate competitors. They are infamous for sneaking in new fees and restrictions in the fine print of the T&C's, and not advising their customers until they see the bill. Just today, several news outlets announced that AT&T has quietly placed usage caps on DSL internet services, without any formal notice to customers. It is well known that AT&T is the largest, most vocal, and most well funded opponent of net-neutrality. They even go so far as to try to convince their own customers that net neutrality is bad, in effect, telling customers, "AT&T knows what you want, you don't."

The most vitriolic comments about this merger on T-Mobile internet forums come from former customers of Cingular and Alltel, who have already endured an AT&T acquisition. Many have told customer service horror stories. On T-Mobile's forums there are reports of people who owned smart phones with former carrier, but only had a voice plan. AT&T automatically subscribed them to a data plan, without any prior notice to the customer. After complaining to customer service, they were told that in AT&T's T&C's any smartphone on their network must have a accompanying data plan, regardless if AT&T subsidized the phone or not. This would affect me, as I am such a customer.

Also on the T-Mobile forums is that AT&T is sending threatening letters to consumers who have enabled a feature known as "tethering", which allows a laptop computer to use the smartphone as a modem. Customers who bought a cell phone where tethering was an advertised feature (such as Blackberry and Android phones) are being threatened for re-enabling an advertised feature that AT&T secretly disabled. AT&T was the last major US carrier to allow tethering, and even then, only upon paying a fee. What makes this more ironic is AT&T does not offer an unlimited data plan, so customers have already paid by the megabyte for the data, but must pay twice if a byte of that already purchased data is used by a laptop computer. This is a disturbing sign of AT&T's monopolistic ambitions. By comparison, T-Mobile has allowed tethering for years, and even includes tethering software out-of-the-box on premium smartphones. While T-Mobile has reserved the right to charge a fee in their T&C's since mid 2010, this appears to be unenforced.

Yet another complaint from some former Cingular and Alltel customers on internet forums, is that when AT&T shut down the network used by their old phone, AT&T made them go to an AT&T store to exchange their phones. AT&T used this opportunity to apply high pressure and even deceptive tactics to pressure customers out of their grandfathered rate plans and into AT&T's current (i.e. more expensive) plans.

I have nothing against AT&T; I am their customer also. However, I want them to earn more of my business by having a good product and good service at a good price, not by acquiring the most viable alternative. I would prefer AT&T use their funds to improve their overburdened network, improve customer service, and innovate new products. AT&T has a history of innovation, but that innovation is in the billing and legal departments, by dreaming up new fees and spying on their own customers to catch violators of the newly revised T&C's.

I thank you for your time, and hope you will take these concerns into consideration when evaluating this merger.

Regards

David Shafer